

Rom. 14:19
So then let us
follow after
things which
make for
peace, and
things
whereby we
may edify one
another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

Anna Surface 2010

John 8:32 And
ye shall
know the
truth and the
truth shall
make you
free.

September
15
2019

ARE SERMONS IMPORTANT?

By Berry Kercheville

Berry Kercheville will be preaching
a series of lessons on:

Discipleship:

Discovering God's Purposes

The schedule is as follows:

Sunday AM Bible Class - 9:30 AM

God's Purpose in Bible Study:

Listening to the Holy Spirit

Sunday AM Worship - 10:20 AM

God's Eternal Purpose

Sunday PM Worship - 5:00 PM

God's Purpose in Our Identity: Rivers of Living Water

Monday Night Lesson - 7:00 PM

God's Purpose in Salvation: Drawn to Jesus

Tuesday Night Lesson - 7:00 PM

God's Purpose in the Message of the Cross

Wednesday Night Lesson - 7:00 PM

God's Purpose in Hope (Gen. 1-2; Mk. 1)

In my last article, we looked at avoiding lecture in Bible classes in order to equip Christians to "*speak the truth in love*" and come to "*the unity of the faith*" [see here](#).

This brings up the question of whether sermons have a place in teaching and equipping. Of course, we have numerous examples of preaching in the New Testament. Luke recorded both sermons and interactive teaching in Acts. We see sermons used quite effectively when instructing large crowds and encouraging a church.

For some Christians today, sermons have fallen out of favor. Many reasons have been suggested. Some speak of television and other forms of video entertainment as becoming so prevalent that attention spans are limited. The argument is that we cannot expect our audiences to listen longer than 20-30 minutes or hear more than one sermon a week because it's just too exhausting and tedious. I will suggest that

none of the above is the real reason. If you are like me, there are only two reasons I have not wanted to hear a sermon: (1) I was carnally minded and enjoyed secular pleasures more than God. (2) I am hungry for the word but the preacher was poorly prepared, disorganized, and spent more time on personal stories than on the scriptures. These are the same two reasons Paul used to expose the Corinthians' rejection of Paul's preaching (**1 Cor. 2:10 – 3:3; 2 Cor. 10**). I can listen to Jeff Wilson or Shane Scott for an hour and beg for more, but ten minutes is too long to listen to a preacher who is not in the word. Therefore, before all else, let's not whitewash the foundational reasons for wanting to limit preaching. That being said, sermons can lose their luster over time if the content never moves beyond the basics. God calls upon us to deliver a *balanced* diet of spiritual food. Some preaching falls into a "sameness rut." Even though the title of the lessons are different, the content of the message tends to have the same, "study more, pray more, sin less, and be a better person," content. Knowing that God has given us a rich wealth of knowledge about him that none of us will ever completely apprehend, there is no excuse for preachers and teachers to limit sermons to their favorite topics or the milk of the word while omitting major portions of the Bible.

Sermons also fail when the preacher and/or the members do not understand the purposes for preaching. **Ephesians 4:11-16** lays before us a huge challenge. Evangelists, shepherds and teachers are to equip saints for the work of ministry and building up the body of Christ. This entails bringing all Christians to the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man, enabling each member to speak the truth in love, and bringing each equipped part together to do its share in building up the body. That is a *monumental* task that cannot be accomplished by surface-level sermons or limiting the amount of time in preaching and teaching. Sermon purpose and direction should meet the goal of **Eph. 4**.

What about the Listener?

The best of sermons will be duds to a poorly prepared listener. In scripture, God rebuked listeners for being dull far more than preachers for inadequately presenting the word. In **Matthew 13**, Jesus gave five parables to a multitude who walked away without seeking to understand his message. As a preacher, few things are more discouraging than members who struggle to stay awake while having so little desire that they will not open their Bibles to personally taste the beauty of the Holy Spirit's words.

Some have the wrong idea about sermons. The sermon is not intended to be a Christian's primary source of biblical edification, knowledge, or encouragement. When Sunday morning is considered "the big show," it creates unrealistic expectations. Was the preacher encouraging? Did he specifically address my present needs? As one man said, "I expect the sermon and the worship to charge me up and get me through the week." Really? How does that statement factor into one's own personal responsibility for study, prayer, and growth? Would the same person be excited to hear Paul preach from his letter to the Romans? While a preacher has a strong responsibility to present the Holy Spirit's message with clarity and from a well-studied text, he is given a direct charge to not preach with words of "*eloquent wisdom, lofty speech, or plausible words*" (**1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1, 4**). He is not to deliver "*words taught by human wisdom*" but that which is "*taught by the Spirit*" (**1 Cor. 2:13**). Paul rebuked the Corinthians when he said, "*The natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God because they are spiritually discerned*" (**1 Cor. 2:14**). But the spiritual person who loves God's word is absolutely ecstatic to learn more about the God he or she desires. The Christian who has been trained to hear the lofty speech of Corinthian preaching will think of Paul's style of sermons to be "*of no account*" (**2 Cor. 10:10**). To be clear, Paul was not condemning a well prepared lesson that is delivered eloquently. Luke described Apollos as "*an eloquent man, competent in the scriptures*" (**Acts 18:21**). Apollos was a great speaker, but his lessons were obviously rooted in his knowledge of the word, not in his ability to promote himself and his talents by an entertaining speech.

The Need for Preaching

A sermon has certain purposes and advantages over a Bible class just as the Bible class has a role that cannot be met by a sermon. In the same way that our 66 books are sermon-like presentations, a sermon can develop a primary message without interruption, which can have a powerful effect on the listener. For example, the writer of Hebrews refers to his letter as a "*brief word of exhortation*." Read aloud, Hebrews would be a 44 minute sermon, but what knowledge and encouragement is revealed in such a short time period!

We should ask the question, "Is this unique advantage in a sermon being wasted?" Often it is. One of the most important reasons for a full-time evangelist is to provide a man with the time needed to prepare lessons that could not otherwise be adequately researched and written after a 40-50 hour week in a secular job. The reason the Levites were supported by the tithe was to provide them time learn the word and teach the people. The same charge is given to the preacher (**2 Tim. 3:14 – 4:5**). A well-prepared sermon takes 12 to 15 hours of work, especially if the preacher is pressing himself to grow in his knowledge and share his growth with the church. Of course, there may be some who purposely do not invest that much time, but a lack of quality preparation is usually obvious to the listener and does not do justice to the charge God has given us. There are two reasons why the preacher who is willing to investigate and expose the messages of *all* the books of the Bible is so vital to the growth of God's people and local churches.

1. A church that is being pressed to grow in a deeper knowledge of God is also a church with a culture of deep love for God and zeal for good works. God is our all-satisfying object. When God and Jesus are at the center of our sermons, we more clearly see his glory and are transformed into his image (**2 Cor. 3:18**).
2. Christians naturally become more contagious when they are learning and tasting the glory of the ages to come. Evangelism is greatly hindered when preaching is dull, shallow, or delivered in an offensive manner. Members will not invite their friends to worship or to personal studies when sermons do not reflect the beauty of God by exposing the riches of his word.

Good preaching and good listening is part of God's plan to save us and the world (**1 Cor. 1:21**). Let us never diminish its importance.

Remember to Get All the Facts

When studying the scriptures for yourself you are going to come across many subjects and very seldom will they be arranged in a systematic order as one might see in a book on Systematic Theology. Rather they will be given to us piecemeal, a statement here and a comment there as we do in natural normal human conversation. This is to be expected from what is essentially a series of messages addressed to natural, normal human beings.

Since this is the case it is extremely unwise to think that one verse of scripture will give us all we need

about any subject. For example most denominational preachers, when asked about salvation, will point us to **John 3:16** and say “Jesus only mentioned belief here, therefore that’s all there is!” This sounds logical except that it turns the Son of God into a liar in other verses of scripture. That is certainly NOT what they INTEND to do but that is IN FACT what they do. For example Jesus said in **Luke 6:46**, *“Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?”* It’s the same Jesus speaking, but if **John 3:16** is all you need then he lied in **Luke 6:46** which says obedience is necessary! Jesus equates Love for Him with Obedience in **John 14:15, 21, 23 & 24**. There are only two logical conclusions. Either Jesus told all the truth in **John 3:16** and was lying in the other verses, OR, **John 3:16** contains one piece of truth about salvation but not all of it. Obviously the second option is the only viable option.

This same principle can be applied to other biblical subjects as well such as the Lord’s Supper, Baptism, and the Angel of Jehovah etc.

Cleveland Reddinger

GOD’S WORD **(A solution for the world)**

God has provided man with instruction that will both simplify his life and provide the necessary satisfaction. *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”* (**James 1:17**) We are also taught He will *...equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ...* (**Heb. 13:21**)

Now this demands we have a genuine belief in God and a concern for His pleasure in us. The very selfish man will not have that concern and will pursue his personal happiness even at the expense of others. Let me explain.

My conduct along with that of every other person who lives on earth will have an effect and influence on the whole of mankind. For instance, God, Who created you and me has demanded we *...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.* (**Mat. 22:37**) If, indeed I achieve this, I will then take His advice instead of that of men such as myself. He has told me the things of the flesh will come to me if I will put Him and His kingdom first in my heart (**Mat. 6:33**). He then tells me the best way to find happiness in this life is to wisely choose to serve Him (**Prov. 29:18**). He then proceeds to teach us that real happiness in this life is achieved by a focus on matters eternal. God tells us for instance to *“Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.”* (**Proverbs 22:6**) Yet many is the parent who forfeits this training for his child to dote upon the

pleasures of life for himself. Then when his child does not grow up to respect him or civil authorities, the parent turns to **Prov. 13:1** to claim his son a fool or scoffer. We know this is a failure to love our own child.

Whereas if the parent spends the time teaching his child the love of God, the child will grow up to respect both the parent and God in heaven and make proper choices with his life. He will then *...obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* (**Eph. 6:1**). He will choose better companions in his youth and learn to walk with wise men as his life choices are being formed and made (**1 Cor. 15:33; Prov. 13:20**). He will likely become a citizen in the kingdom of God (**Col. 1:13,14; Phil. 3:20,21**), or at the very least become an honorable citizen of the nation in which he lives.

We have, at least in this nation, and I suspect in others as well, a lack of this respect for natural authority. It is obvious this begins in the home and at the very earliest of ages for children. It is such an abdication of this responsibility that has spawned the problem we face with members of society rejecting order and civil authority. When children are taught a proper respect for what is truly good for them and others such anarchy does not rule in their hearts.

Maybe when we look at the world, we believe matters have progressed to such a state we must simply give up and accept it as is. That simply is not a choice and the reason is given by Paul in **Romans 2:6,7**, when he explains the righteous judgment of God, *“who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;”*. We, brethren are the salt of the earth and light of the world (**Mat. 5:13-16**). Persevering in that which is right in the sight of God is how we influence society to whatever extent is possible. That is our role while living here in order to achieve glory, honor and immortality there.

There is no room for compromise. Our social situation is different than Israel under the Law of Moses. They were to drive out all the differing peoples of Canaan so those idolaters would not draw them away from Jehovah (**Deut. 7:1-6**). We, to the contrary are to be committed to the Lord and carry His message to the world among us. We are to love our enemies, the enemies of God in order to carry His message to this lost and dying world (**Mat. 5:43-48**). Paul reminds us we cannot go out of the world (**1 Cor. 5:10**), yet John warns us not to fall in love with the world (**1 John 2:15-17**).

We have a role to play in God’s plan to redeem His creation. When we fail to play that role we abdicate our responsibility to His cause. He sent His Son to die for every man (**2 Cor. 5:14**) in order to offer the righteousness of God to replace the burden of sin. We then, must do our part if there is any hope for the lost at all.

Jim Stauffer

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Deacons: Bill Miller

Brandon Jimison

Casey Dent

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NEWS AND NOTES: SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

JAN PATRICK, ALMA BAUMGARTNER,
STEVE WIMP, LINDIA JACKSON AND
TRUDY MULLEN.

SUZANNE WIMP IS IN SHAWNEE PARC,
ROOM 118

BIBLE CLASSES - SUNDAY -
STUDY OF AUTHORITY - TEACHER
BILL MILLER

WEDNESDAY - 1&2 TIMOTHY
JIM STAUFFER - TEACHER

SUNDAY MORNING

SERMON:
GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE
BERRY KERCHEVILLE



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10